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New-Year's thoughts addressed to the readers of the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.

TIME is constantly, like a flowing stream, passing away. It never makes a pause, whether wisely improved to the purposes of piety and virtue, or foolishly abused to the purposes of impiety and vice. It always moves on, with its accustomed rapidity. All who are now busy and active in its concerns, who are performing their respective parts on its stage, will find the scene soon closed, and will be removed quickly to a world, where there will be no change, except from one degree of happiness to another, or from one degree of misery to another.

For their own convenience, mankind have universally parcelled out time into various portions. When one of these imaginary periods has revolved, we immediately enter on another. We need some marks or lines of distinction, to remind us of the swift manner, in which our days glide away. A year is one of the greater divisions of time. One year more of our term of existence in this world, has performed its hasty revolution. We have commenced a new year. Propriety dictates that we should take some serious notices of our transition from one year of our lives to another. The most indeed notice it, only by congratulations, festivity, and sinful rejoicings. As our preservation, through the kindness and indulgence of Providence, another year, is an important blessing, we may congratulate each other. But as we are rational creatures, and probationers for eternity, our passage from one year of life to another, ought to be improved in a religious and pious manner. Our readers have ever been accustomed, since the first publication of this work, to be addressed by the Editors, on the commencement of a new year. We now request them to make a contemplative pause, to review the events of the past year, and to look forward and remember what may, probably, take place, in the year now begun.

And, first—

As you are requested to review the events of the past year, you may well be urged to realize the importance of discovering what your present state and character are in a religious and moral regard. "Know thyself," was esteemed by the wise men, among heathen moralists, to be a maxim of such interesting moment as to have a celestial origin; was supposed to be revealed from heaven. Self-knowledge is a point as difficult as it is important; is hard to acquire, on account of the depravity and deceitfulness of the human heart. We are ever prone to deceive ourselves. Hence this needful exhortation of the apostle; *But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* Sin always deceives us. It never appears in its own proper colours. While strangers to God and piety, we are willing to be deceived. There is a treachery, and there is a self-flattery in man truly astonishing. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? It is painful to search into our views and principles of action, lest we should find so much to condemn and so little to approve, as to fill us with shame and remorse. We love to *hope well* of ourselves as long as possible. As a man who lives beyond his income, and who contracts large debts, without a reasonable prospect of being able to meet them, conscious that his circumstances are not good, dreads to examine his accounts, expecting that the result will be unpleasant, so most people, with great reluctance, look into their hearts, to see what their state and character are, in relation to spiritual and heavenly things. But self-examination is a duty *daily* needful. It is a duty, also, greatly neglected. To enter upon a new year, without knowing whether we are prepared for the happiness of the righteous, or exposed to the misery of the wicked in another world, ought deeply to affect us. If we have lived, through another year, and cannot now give a satisfactory answer to this grand question, we have no time to lose in determining it. An infinitely merciful God, spares us, in life, and prolongs our days on purpose that we may have opportunity to decide this point. It is of his mercies that we are not consumed; and having obtained help of him, we continue unto this time, in the enjoyment of health and reason; and we should look into our hearts, and resolve that we will not pass any longer time in a state of total uncertainty, what will be our destiny, through an endless duration. You should ask yourselves such questions as these. "What are my character and condition? Am I chiefly delighted with the service of my Maker, and disposed to devote myself to him in a life of holy obedience? Or do I chuse the world for my portion, preferring its friendship to the blessings of grace and friendship of God? Am I a disciple of Christ, taking him for my Lord and Master, acquiescing in his offices, atonement, and divinity? Or do I only wear his name, and make an empty profession of his religion. As time rapidly

passes away, I am going to the regions of eternal felicity, or to the regions of interminable misery? To which is the temper of my heart most assimilated? Do I love the ways of holiness on earth, or of sin, and pollution? Why shall I postpone the decision of this question, till the irrevocable sentence of the Supreme Judge, before whom I *must* at last stand, and before whom I *may* stand, before this year shall be closed, shall determine it. If it shall be determined against me, my case will be irremediable. Overwhelming thought! Who can dwell with devouring flames? Who can inhabit everlasting burnings? Ah! a *soul to perish* in endless misery, through the abuse of time and talents, of the means of grace, and offers of pardon! But I am now on this side the grave. I have my health and reason, the calls and messages of grace are addressed to me. It is not too late for me to repent. My heart may yet be changed—and I may yet become a subject of forgiving goodness."

If our readers will faithfully pursue this inquiry, they will find themselves divided, as all mankind are, into the righteous and wicked, into those who love and serve God, and those who forget and neglect him; into those who repent sincerely of their sins, and unfeignedly believe in a Saviour; who delight in, and conscientiously practise their duty, and into those who allow themselves in the habitual omission of duty, and indulgence of evil passions, appetites, and courses. In religion there is no neutrality. We are all arranged into one or the other of these classes, either the enemies of God and his kingdom, or the friends of him, and his interest.

2. Standing on the threshold of a new year, can we forbear to reflect on the mutability of the world? The fashion of this world passeth away. The scene is continually shifting. New actors are coming on to the stage, in quick succession, and former ones passing off. They disappear, and are seen no more. Look round, and behold the changes, which have happened in the sphere of your own observation. This is emphatically a changeful world. Nature around is constantly varying. The vicissitudes of day and night, the revolutions of the several seasons of the year, and the very face of the sky, now serene and bright, now covered with clouds, and threatening angry storms, teach us this most important lesson, the mutability of all beneath the sun. When we look back on time already gone, it cannot be recalled, and seems to us short, and like a dream. As the seasons rapidly revolve, so man passes quickly through the various periods of his probationary term. From infancy to youth—from youth to manhood—from manhood, to feeble old age, how rapid the succession! These are the spring, the summer, the autumn, and winter of life. How wise and blessed are such as cultivate piety and virtue in youth, that, in riper years, they may bear fruit, in a well-ordered life and conversation to the praise of God; and if they reach old age, may be supported with the consolations of religion and the

testimony of a good conscience, and have conferred on them, a rich reward in the resurrection of the just! It is common to hear this remark made by people, in what a changing world do we live? But the remark is seldom pursued to those practical and pious purposes, to which it ought. What great and mighty changes does *one year* often exhibit: changes in the circumstances of individuals, of families, of nations, of states, and kingdoms. Many of these changes in the world, are extremely afflictive and distressing. Such are the changes from health to sickness, from ease and plenty to poverty and want; from honor to disgrace; from prosperity to adversity; from the enjoyment of friends, in the domestic circles, to a deprivation of them by the ravages of death: in states and kingdoms, from a happy peace, where the citizens are enjoying the fruit of their industry, *sitting under their own vines and fig trees*, to the horrors and calamities of war: from national prosperity to national misfortunes. If the mind pass in contemplation to the nations of Europe, what disastrous changes and revolutions among them, within the compass of a few years? and, probably, even now several of the larger kingdoms of that quarter of the globe are plunged in all the miseries and horrors of a bloody war. The predictions of scripture are fast fulfilling—the decrees of the Almighty are rolling on vast events. Our consolation is, that an *unchangeable* God is at the head of the universe, and that he reigneth, and will dispose all things to his own glory. *The holy One of Israel changeth not.* He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Every good and every perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

3. We may again urge you to reflect on the mortality of man, as well as the mutability of the world. Nothing new can be advanced on so common a subject. But common as it is, it is always important, and always useful. What we want is to have an impressive sense of it on our minds, and our hearts deeply affected. We must be stupid, indeed, not to feel, where we are all equally and greatly interested.—It is appointed for all men once to die. Man dieth and wasteth away; yea man giveth up the ghost and where is he? No man hath power over the spirit to retain it, in the day of death. Neither is there any discharge in that war. Certain as death is, yet there is no event, which men are more prone to forget—which they study more to exclude from their thoughts, than that which is for ever to break their ties with this world, and to fix beyond it, their immutable destiny. They are engaged in business, or in pleasure, in the plans of ambition, in the schemes of avarice, in the cares of fortune, in the pursuits of amusement, in the round of folly, till approaching, by imperceptible degrees, the verge of the grave, in one dreadful moment of surprise, they descend into it. And even the uncertainty of the time of our departure hence, which ought to keep it

ever present to our view, is that very circumstance, of which human corruption lays hold, to make us forget it altogether. Though all must die, yet all flatter themselves that they shall still live. "The healthy expect to live, because they do not perceive in themselves the symptoms of decay—The infirm expect to live, because their infirmity has become a habit—The young expect to live, because they have not lived so long as others—And the old because they have lived longer. Who expects his last sickness till it has overtaken him? Who of the sick apprehends he shall die, till his case has become desperate? And even in the last agonies, frequently, does he not look to find some shred of hope, because life is still possible? Oh! fatal deceiver! that for ever blinds the sinner and cheats him of his salvation! that infatuates him with the world, and makes him unmindful of his future state; that persuades him to trust to life, and hides the importance, and even certainty of dying, in the uncertainty of the time of dying."

Man is a frail and dying creature. We draw mortal breath and inhabit mortal bodies. The sentence originally pronounced on human nature, that dust it was, and unto dust must return, has been fulfilling in every age of the world. *Our fathers where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever?* One generation, like the waves of the sea, goeth and another cometh. How thin is the partition between us and the invisible state, and how short the transition! The partition is no more than the breath in our nostrils, and the transition may be made in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Look over the world, and see the ravages of death, from the first instance of it, in our race, until the present day. All, who have lived in the past ages, have gone down to the great congregation, who are sleeping in the dust. "The earth is supposed to change its inhabitants, at a medium, three times in a century. The change in this part of the world, is not so rapid, but extending it to all the people of the globe, in all climates and nations, probably the estimate may not be far from the truth. The number of people on the earth, at any one period or time, cannot possibly be ascertained to any degree of exactness. But it must, no doubt, amount to many hundreds of millions." Some have reckoned about nine hundred millions.—Probably this calculation does not exceed the truth. Now suppose so many souls passing off this stage, and as many coming on, three times in the space of one hundred years; which will be nearly eighty thousand in a day;—and suppose this to have been the rate of succession for several thousand years past, and you will have an affecting view of the ravages of death in our world. The numbers who have lived and died in past ages, utterly surpass our comprehension. In what a dying world do we live! How many have departed life the past year! No age, no condition is exempt from the arrests of the king of terrors. The young and old, the rich and poor, the learned and unlearned—those in high stations, in civil or sacred life, must alike go down

to the silence of the grave.—How many useful and important characters have been, the past year, called off from their labors, and closed their probationary existence. We, who are ministers of the gospel, have been often warned of our own mortality, in the course of the year past. An *unusual number* of respected and worthy brethren in the gospel ministry, in our state, have been dismissed from their labors, among their people, by death. The Rev. Justus Mitchel of New-Canaan, died Feb. 25, 1806. The Rev. Doctor Burnet of Norwalk, June 30, 1806. The Rev. Sherman Johnson of the 2d society in Milford, May 22, 1806. The Rev. Nicholas Street of East-Haven, Octob. 4, 1806. The Rev. David Brownson of Oxford, Nov. 1806. The Rev. Jeremiah Day of Washington, Sept. 1, 1806. The Rev. Cotton M. Smith of Sharon, Nov. 27, 1806. The Rev. Cornelius Adams of the 2d Society in Windham, Nov. 28, 1806. And the news of the death of the Rev. Joseph Washburn of Farmington did not reach us till the beginning of the year. He died on his passage to Charleston, South Carolina, in the month of December, 1805. Two of these ministers, the Rev. Jeremiah Day, and the Rev. Joseph Washburn were Editors of the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine. We weep over our deceased brethren. And what an occasion of thanksgiving have we that God has spared us! And how should their dissolution excite us to be ready—to watch and pray always, since we know not the day nor the hour, when the son of man cometh! May we do all that our hand findeth to do, with all our might, while we live;—and when our Lord shall say to us, in his Providence, *behold I come quickly*, may we be so weaned from the earth, and so thirst for the life of Heaven, that our hearts may echo back *even so come Lord Jesus.*—We condole with the afflicted and bereaved families and relations of these our departed and esteemed Brethren. May divine consolations be ministred to them for their support! We, also, sympathize with the people of their respective churches and congregations. May they remember their counsels and warnings—follow them, wherein they followed Christ—improve the past instructions, which they have received from their labours of love among them, wisely and faithfully. They will hear the voice of their beloved Pastors no more. May their solicitude be to stand before their judge, at last, in peace, and give up their accounts at his awful tribunal, with joy, and not with grief! Again,

4. As Editors, in our address to our readers, on the commencement of a new year, we would affectionately press them to reflect on the brevity of human life, and certainty that, in a little space, they must all be in eternity. We who are now in health and ease, acting our several parts on the stage of time, must very soon, at the longest, follow after those, who have already submitted to the unavoidable doom of our nature. The fate of past generations, will be the fate of the present, and the future. When we see a man go down to the grave, this is a natural thought, beau-

tifully expressed, in the book of Job, *every man shall draw after him.* Had we no other evidence of our mortality, but what arises from the multitudes, which have died before us this would be sufficient to put it beyond a doubt. Providence, infinitely wise and gracious, allots to us, but a short period, in which to act our part in life. And upon our present character and conduct depend consequences of infinite moment: even an eternity of blessedness, or an eternity of misery. We are all on trial for an endless state of being. We have an immensely important work to perform, the salvation of our souls to secure; and but a short term allowed us, in which to perform it. How short the time from the cradle to the grave! Life is but a rapid moment.

Again, you are requested, in the review of your past days, to consider how large a portion of them has been mispent and lost. Such is all that time which is passed in sin, in impenitence, in unbelief, in errors, in vain amusements, in the gratification of corrupt passions, in immoral courses. As the chief end of man is to serve and glorify God, and to promote the best good of society, so all that time, which is not employed to these happy purposes, must be regarded as lost or mispent. If you have actually entered on wisdom's ways, all of which are pleasantness, and on her paths, all of which are peace, yet how long did you live in enmity to God? How many days and years did you spend in sin and vanity, in neglect of a Saviour, in disregard of his messages of grace, in an undue attachment to the world—in profaneness—in omission of duty! Did you not, many days and years, set your affections on things on the earth, and not on things above, where Christ is at the right hand of God? Or make the most favourable supposition, that you remembered your Creator, in the days of youth, and early, in the morning of life, commenced a pious and virtuous course, yet how little proficiency in religious knowledge—in holy temper—and Christian experience have you made, compared to what you *ought*, and to what you *might* have made? How many precious seasons and opportunities of receiving or doing good have you lost? How indevout has been your attendance on the means of grace—on divine worship, and holy ordinances? How little have you cultivated and exemplified the Christian temper, and imitated your Lord and Master? What little good have you done, in your day and place, compared to what you might have done? How cold your love to God—how wavering your faith in the blood of the atonement—how languid your zeal—how superficial your repentance—how proud even your humility!—But on supposition, you are now in your sins, unrenewed and unforgiven, you have mispent all your past days and years. The whole of your time has been employed to purposes, foreign to the great end of your rational existence. You may have spent your time wisely for this world—in acquiring property by honest industry, and discreet management of temporal concerns—may have been

externally regular and decorous. This however, comparatively, is but a low use of time and your rational powers. The grand use, which you should make of them, is to become friends to God, and disciples of a meek and humble Redeemer. Time is given you as a space for repentance, and preparation for eternity.

6. Further, sixthly, when you look forward through the course of another year, you are to feel that days and years are given you, that you might attend to such duties as become your station in the world. Every station and place, from the highest to the lowest, should be filled up with duty. None are so high in rank and fortune as to be above the obligations of piety and virtue. The higher any are, in these respects, the greater are the obligations upon them, to do good, in their day and place; and to be as distinguished for their zeal in the cause of religion, as in their station and affluence. Where much is given, much may reasonably be required. Neither are any so low and poor in the world as not to be able to do much good, by a blameless walk—by sanctity of manners—by exemplary piety—and fervent and affectionate prayers. The call of God to devote ourselves to his service is to all, high or low, old or young. None can excuse themselves. Time is given us to secure an eternal well-being. The day of life is the only season allowed us to do this. We have now a fair trial. A *second* trial will never be indulged. The present is a probation, and the next world is a retribution state. Now is our seed time. The future world will be our harvest; and we shall reap as we sow. The present is our season for working, and the future world, the season of receiving the meet recompence of reward. *Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.*

After attending to the thoughts above illustrated, it is extremely natural to infer the great evil of sin. The penalty of the law teaches its demerits—the sufferings of Christ, which redeem us from the curse of the law, exhibit more conspicuously, to the whole intellectual creation, the exceeding malignity of sin—all the methods of divine grace to save sinners conspire together to manifest the evil of sin.—All the administrations of Providence, in punishing nations and individuals—in all the wars, pestilence, calamities, and miseries brought on the world, as divine judgments declare the evil of sin. All natural flows from moral evil. The latter has brought death into the world. In the original threatening to man, the words are, *in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* The Apostle informs us that, *by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all for that all have sinned.* How widely spread has been the dominion of death! But sin has given it this power. The first offence introduced it. It is not each

man's transgression in particular, which subjects him to death; but all become liable to it, by the first transgression. By one offence death reigns. Alas! the first sin has filled the world, in ages past, with death. How incalculably great the evil of sin, which has caused the wide devastations of death! Is it not an infinite evil? How perfectly reasonable therefore that we should repent of it—abhor it—mourn over it—turn from the practice of it—and resolve that we will enter on this year, with a fixed purpose, by divine grace, to spend it in deep repentance for all our sins of heart, and thought, and life? Shall we, like fools, make a mock of sin? Shall we disobey and rise up against the omniscient, all-holy God:—Shall we dare break his laws—disregard his calls:—turn a deaf ear to his warnings? Is it safe for us to live any longer, exposed to his anger. A way is open for us to escape from the destruction of sin through the peace-speaking blood of the Saviour. The door of mercy is not shut. Free pardon is offered. Divine patience yet bears with us. We live to see this year, while others have died, and gone into eternity, to appear before a holy God, and render an account to him of the improvement, which they have made of time, and the religious advantages, which they have enjoyed. Of what inconceivable moment for all to fly to the Son of God for help and pardon, for hope and salvation!

We, also, in the review of the truths suggested above, learn the certainty of a world to come. There will be a resurrection of the dead. The soul is not destroyed by death—it does not die with the body—or suffer annihilation. Its very frame or make points out an hereafter. When man dies, the soul does not become extinct. The dust, it is true, returns to the dust as it was, but the soul to God, who gave it, to hear its sentence, and receive its doom. Dust we are, and unto dust, we must all return. But, when the body undergoes the change of death, the soul does not cease to act. When we deposit the remains of our deceased friends, in the bosom of the earth, whence man was originally taken, and at the mouth of the opening grave, take our last mournful adieu of them, we are to remember that death is not an eternal sleep; that a resurrection morning will come, *when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.—And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: this is the second*

death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

We close our long address to our readers, with observing that if they look forward, through the year now commenced, they must feel, that *many changes* will take place, among individuals—families—states and kingdoms. And, that *one change*, that of death, awaits all; and will sooner or later come: that it may come to them ere this year shall finish its revolution, and that religion alone, piety and virtue can prepare them for this solemn event, and the beatitudes of the heavenly world.

On the Sin and Imperfection of Men.

THE words perfect and perfection are used in the holy scriptures in very different senses. Perfection, in the most strict sense, belongs only to sinless beings; first of all to the great and holy God, who possesses all natural and moral qualities and powers in infinite fulness. It is also ascribed to creatures who have never sinned, denoting their moral purity, although all their natural powers and moral qualities are finite; so, that when compared with an infinite God, it is said of them, "The heavens are not clean in his sight—Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly." It is thus, that finite falls short of infinite perfection, even where there is a complete freedom from sin.

The words perfect and perfection are often used by the sacred writers in a subordinate and limited sense, "mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, the end of that man is peace."

In these words are meant that faith and godliness which are found in true Christians, although they have a great degree of remaining sin. The same expressions are many times used in the holy scriptures, in this subordinate sense, describing the present character and attainments of God's people. They are called perfect in comparison with the natural character of men, and their own former temper and practice, although they fall far short of entire freedom from sin, which will not take place until the body dies, and their souls are admitted into the presence of God.

There is no subject, in which men more often deceive themselves, than concerning the obedience which they render to God. They think that at some times, or in some respects, their obedience is complete. This is the same as thinking they are in some respects perfect, and may be admitted to the favor of God, without an exercise of infinite grace.

The rule of obedience given by our divine Lord is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect," which seems to mean all the holiness, which we have a natural capacity for exercising. Such holiness is found in no man, at any time, or in any exercise or action. The Psalmist saith, "I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad." By the end of all perfection, is meant the

incompleteness of all human obedience; I have seen the end, the utmost extent, and the sum of all obedience which men render; and compared with the law of God, they fall far short of those broad requirements, which can be satisfied with nothing but the most absolute holiness, in all our thoughts, words and actions. I have seen men of every character in this world, both good and bad; I have noticed their conduct; I have judged their motives, so far as they can be examined by human sight; I have observed their deviation from righteousness, and the defects which were conspicuous in their best duties: I have then compared all these with the divine law, and find that it is exceeding broad, beyond the utmost obedience which men ever render to God.

But lest any should think this description is injurious to the present state of human nature, let us inquire what kind and degree of obedience to the divine law are found, in any of mankind, so far as can be discovered by their actions, and known by their own confession concerning themselves.

The greatest part of mankind are overspread with the darkness of heathenism; they have not now, nor ever had, any knowledge of the true God as he is acknowledged in Christian lands; they have not his word, his law or gospel; they do not know the divine character, perfections, government, or the method of his grace, as these divine and glorious subjects may be understood by those who read his word.

If we look to their manners, there is scarce a resemblance of that obedience, which the divine law requires.

They do not know Jehovah, as God, as governor of the world independent of all other beings, as a lawgiver for all our thoughts and actions, as a Redeemer and a Judge; and without this knowledge there can be no perfect obedience.

They are, consequently, immersed in an immoral temper and practice; have made unto themselves Gods, which are no Gods; have indulged in those sins, which are against nature; and have committed and still continue to commit, all the vices of heathenism, as we find them described by a sacred writer, in the beginning of the epistle to the Romans. All ages have borne a testimony, that, in the heathen world, nothing can be found, which bears a resemblance to true obedience.

Let us also inquire, what kind of obedience is rendered to the pure and holy law of God, in Christian lands?

In these, there is an unfailing source of information, the word of God, together with many institutions for religious instruction, which arise therefrom. But we have found much less effect from Christian instruction, than we should have supposed, if God had not been pleased to make the experiment, on a scale so extensive, as cannot fail to convince us, if we are observant of facts. Let us look on Christian lands where the word of God is read; where the Lord's sabbaths are observed; where the outlines of Christianity enter into the education of all our youth; where parents call themselves Christian instructors; where all

our civil laws profess to be in consonance with the written laws of God: Here let us inquire, what is there that looks like perfect obedience to the law of God?

In the first place, how many do we find, even here, who deny all this divine expense to instruct and make men better? How many, who will not allow any other rule of action than the indulgence of their own lusts? How many, who allow it in words; but still deny it in practice? How many who are irreligious, injurious in their words, profane, false, impure, unrighteous and ungodly; thereby showing that there is no fear of God before their eyes? Certainly there is nothing like obedience to the divine law, in these.

Or if we strictly examine those, who have the character of being externally moral, what shall we determine of them? This is a class of people whose characters are much preferable to the last; yet it is not all these who have any thing in their hearts like true obedience to the pure and broad law of the Lord. They may be influenced to their external practice, by motives, which will not be accepted before God. They may be self-interested and designing in those actions, which are exteriorly good. They may have dishonest hearts while their tongues speak piously, deceiving men, and very often deceiving themselves. Therefore external morality doth not certainly amount to such obedience as complies with the law of God; and this will appear more probable, when we next consider the character of Christians in this world, as it is described in the word of God and confessed by themselves.

The best Christians are not perfect, in the sense they ought to be, and as is required by the law of God, and by the precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his holy gospel.—O Christian! doth not thy conscience bear witness how much sin there is in thy best works? Thy love is not such as is due to a being of infinite glory; thy faith in its most perfect state, often needs to be quickened; thy humility is always mingled with some degree of pride and self-righteousness; thy resignation and submission are often interrupted by discontent under the dispensations of divine Providence; thy good works are intermingled and corrupted by the works of the world; when thou thinkest thyself most near to God, in some way, and by means unperceived by thyself, thou art at a distance from him; temptation hath overcome thee, and thou art ready to say, my joys are gone, and it must indeed be sovereign grace to save thee. Such are the human character and heart, in their best, and most sanctified condition in this world, so that the pious Psalmist might justly say, "I have seen the end, the sum, the extent of human perfection, and find they are but imperfection and guilt."

But what saith the law of God? it is exceeding broad, and requires perfection, in the highest sense that it can be exercised by creatures; that the heart be perfectly holy, and every word and action consistent with such a state.—"My son, give me thy heart."—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,

with all thy strength, with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." "Whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."—These, with innumerable other precepts of similar import, are the rule of obedience.—The law of God requires us to love him supremely; make him the object of our chief delight, confidence and hope; that we seek his glory in all we do, and act on the most perfect principles of justice and benevolence; and that all our thoughts, motives and desires be pure and uncorrupt. It not only forbids the external practice of evil, but even conceiving it in our imaginations and wishing it success, or desiring any benefit to ourselves, in a way, that is not most perfectly just.

Therefore, all evil thoughts are forbidden, and are to be bro't into judgment.—A sinful temper, in the divine sight, and before the omniscient judge, is considered as a sinful work, and will be as proper matter of judgment and punishment as those visible crimes which men condemn.—This law is therefore exceeding broad, and hath never been obeyed by any of the children of men. The best of mankind are continually transgressing the spirit of the commandment.—Some evil affection or lust of the heart; some unlawful desire or motive; some imperfection in the duties which they profess to discharge, render them sinners in the divine sight, and bring them under the sentance, "there is not a just man on earth, who doeth good and sinneth not." "They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

This description of human nature teaches us, that the mouth of every creature will be stopped before God. The apostle tells us this shall be the case; and we have the evidence, not only of his testimony but of our own experience, that all shall be guilty before God. When the assembled world are gathered before the tribunal of Jehovah; men of every place; of every age; of every character; whether Jews or Gentiles, whatever their description may be; whether disbelievers or moral persons, or real Christians; on the ground of obedience to this broad law of the Lord, they will be found guilty, and their mouths will be stopped. Doubtless, there will be found a great difference of character in these persons, but all will appear sinners, when judged by the divine commandment; and every tongue will be silenced in the presence of the infinite Judge. There, the disbeliever will have nothing to say in excuse for his infidelity; there, the immoral will find that their crimes were an outrage on truth, righteousness and goodness; there, the mere external moralist will find, that whatever his external deportment hath been, his heart was rebellious against the Lord; and there, even the saint will acknowledge, that the grace of God which saves him, is not granted as a reward of his own obedience,—but a fruit of infinite mercy in Christ. His best duties, all his graces and all his good works have been min-

gled with sin sufficient to condemn him for ever.

Is there not then a necessity for free and sovereign grace for the salvation of any of mankind? If all have broken the law; if the most decent, the most careful, the most watchful and regular in their conversation, as well as others, are found deficient; then, it is only through free and sovereign grace, that any can be saved. An interest in the righteousness and atonement of Christ will be the only ground of glorying, in that day, when the secrets of men shall be judged. All the multitude, who now think lightly of a gospel, will know it to be the only hope of mankind, and they will be convinced that compliance with this gospel is the only evidence of their safe estate.

And who can deny the necessity of a divine influence to renew them? If all are by nature and practice dead in trespasses and sins; if all have fallen far short of the perfection required by the law of God, they must need the power of the Holy Ghost to renew them to holiness, and make them meet partakers of the inheritance of the saints. Let those, then, who quench the spirit, remember they are resisting the grace of God, and destroying their own souls.

M.

On the advantages of serving the Lord.

THE prophet Malachi, in addressing the irreligious of his own age, saith "ye have said it is vain to serve God, and what profit is there that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?"

Such inquiries are always made, by way of objection against true piety, nor are they peculiar to the day of the prophet. They are made by sinners in every age, though not perhaps openly, yet in the doubts of their own hearts, and in their resolutions to indulge themselves in sin, whatever may be the consequences. It is this kind of delusion, which holds a great number of mankind in sensuality, impiety and that love of the world, which is inconsistent with Christian faith and godliness.

They are so blinded by the desire of their own hearts, that they think there is more beauty and pleasure in sin, than in holiness; nor do they believe that the Lord will be strict to fulfil his promises to the righteous, or to execute his threatenings on such sinners, as forget his name and transgress his laws.

Having fallen into this delusion, through the sin of their hearts, they take occasion to strengthen it, from such dispensations in nature and providence, as are necessary, in this life, to form a state of probation for men.

To render this present life a fit state of trial, for recovering the sinful from the thraldom of vice, and to mature the pious in grace; it is fit they should be treated alike, in many things. For this end, it is necessary they should live in a mixed state, be fed and clothed together, and share, in common, many dealings of providence, both merciful and afflictive.

That sinners may have the calls of divine grace, it is necessary they receive the bounties of time: also, that the children of God may grow in holiness, and be preserved from the temptations of the world, it is fit they should be often afflicted, bereaved, and oppressed with divers trials, either by the instrumentality of men or the immediate act of providence. This is appointed by their heavenly Father, in covenant faithfulness, that by these means, through his mighty power, he may keep them to eternal life. Hence we often see them afflicted and despised by men, while the waters of a full cup are wrung out unto the ungodly, and we do not see them in trouble like other men. These things are observed in the dealings of divine providence. The same representation is made by the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes "For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good so is the sinner; and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath."

We also find in the parable of Dives snd Lazarus, spoken by our Lord himself, a description of very great worldly blessings bestowed on an ungodly man, and the most extreme indigence appointed to an eminent saint; but in the parable he is careful to describe to us the end of the scene, one was comforted and the other tormented.

For such appointments as these, infinite wisdom hath sufficient reasons; sometimes we discern them, at others they are inscrutable; but ought never to be improved as a reason for saying "It is vain to serve the Lord." Great numbers of mankind, by their conduct, prove themselves to be in this delusion. They see but little difference, in the appointments of divine providence, between the good and the evil, and this being the case, having no love of religion, no delight in prayer, no pleasure in the word of God, no satisfaction in the duties of piety, no knowledge of the blessedness there is in fellowship with the Father and his Son Christ Jesus, and no sense of an eternity to come, they are ready to say, "What profit is there that we keep the ordinance of the Lord? But let all such make a solemn pause! they are rash and ignorant, and have not carefully attended to the subject. Let them make a solemn appeal to common experience, and to their own consciences, and they must be convinced that great benefits result from attending to the means of serving the Lord; also that to neglect this will be the certain means of future lamentation.

However irreligious persons may esteem the comforts of religion, they wish to enjoy the blessings of time; therefore, I will first address them with an argument drawn from the prosperity of this world. Those, who wish to be happy in this world, act a most unwise part;

when they neglect religion. They look to the present world for happiness, and then reject the only means by which we can have hope in life. Religion is as necessary for the best portion in this world, as it is for the glory of the future; and by a contrary imagination the irreligious greatly deceive themselves. An eminent apostle speaking on this very point, saith, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

From a faithful attendance on the means of religion arise those restraints on our own evil hearts, those moral dispositions, and that attentive performance of civil, moral, and social duties, which give us health, plenty, the confidence of mankind and a good reputation; and from these flow all other worldly blessings, which we can enjoy. Therefore it is not in vain to serve the Lord, if we have a regard, only to the blessings of this world.

Experience, also, teaches that those, who renounce the obligation and the practice of religious duties in their lives; do generally immerse themselves in many sorrows. Before they go to the grave, they reap the fruit of that which they have sowed; and it is not strange to see them among the outcasts of society, by their indulgence of such sins as destroy the health of their bodies, break their social relations, and cut them off from the confidential esteem of mankind. Such are the worldly evils, which come on those, who say, it is vain to serve the Lord.

Is it not a most serious consideration that men need assistance from the Spirit of all grace, to prepare them for eternal life? The holy scriptures describe this grace, as being necessary for salvation; as being given by God to all his people; as being procured by our Redeemer in his death, when he also purchased the forgiveness of sin. The word of God assures us the office of the Holy Spirit, in the salvation of mankind, is to convince of sin, of righteousness, of judgment to come; and to renew the hearts of men in holiness, faith in Christ, and obedience to his laws. This assistance from God is commonly given to those who seek him, by an attendance on the means of religion, and keep his ordinance. While those who pray, who seriously read and hear divine truth, find themselves quickened by the spirit of God; such, as determine that they will not serve him, are forsaken by the influences of grace. They do not begin to consider their own sin and guilt, and therefore he leaveth them to the desire of their own hearts, and to receive their portion in this world.

It is from this provocation that many are left by the Holy Spirit, after which, they become prayerless persons; they neglect to read the scriptures of truth; they do not restrain the lusts of the heart; nor watch against the immoralities of the world and the temptations of sense.

This is the first step to open ungodliness, and from this they proceed to daring impiety, to infidelity and an utter stupidity respecting divine and eternal things. Thus they lose the

benefits of endeavoring to serve God and keep his ordinance.

It is a solemn consideration that after men have thus run the course of impiety, it becomes very difficult to renew in them any feeling of moral obligation, of duty or of safety.

The Lord seemeth to have heard their words, that it is a vain thing to serve him. Many are thus left, who in the early part of life began hopefully; but being ensnared by an evil world, and the allurements of sense, have made shipwreck of the Christian faith, determining that gain is godliness, and thus have come to the end of the wicked.

To serve the Lord and keep his ordinance is the only possible means for a peaceful conscience. Give a man all which the world can furnish; give him its honors, its riches and pleasures; give him the most favored condition his imagination can paint; give him the respect, the service and the friendly vows of all his fellow creatures: with a guilty conscience he is wretched. With a fear of himself, of death, of eternity, and the God who made him, he is miserable. Such a guilty conscience cannot fail to be a companion in the breast of every one, who saith it is vain to serve God, and what profit is there that we have kept his ordinance?

But man must die; and to serve and seek the Lord is the only means for dying in peace. Although the world and all its pleasures are around us, we must speedily be gone. Health may be confirmed and our life at ease, still we must speedily relinquish them. The places, which now know us, will soon know us no more. This is necessarily true of every one who reads, whether he be old or young. Who is there, among the most stout-hearted, on a death bed will say, It is vain to serve God, and what profit is there that we keep his ordinance? Not one such instance would probably be found among all who read this, if each one after the other, was called consciously to stand on the edge of the grave. All, being alarmed, would wish an interest in the favor of their Maker, and bless the end of that man, who hath served the Lord. Surely, to enjoy this would be a substantial profit from seeking the Lord.

But consider the conclusion of the whole matter; to serve God and keep his ordinance hath a promise of the life, which is to come. Blessedness, in the life to come, is promised to our faith in Christ and obedience to his laws. Salvation is most absolutely promised through the merits of a Redeemer; but it is only to persons of a certain character. It is to those, who do not think it vain to serve the Lord; to those who find pleasure in walking before him, in the mourning of repentance for all the sins by which they have dishonored his name. These benefits furnish a full answer to the irreligious objection, It is vain to serve God, and what profit is there that we have kept his ordinance? Whatever men may think in the time of worldly prosperity, and while their consciences are quiet, the moment is near when they will duly estimate the benefits of religion.

A few sportive days may be passed in folly, but they will indeed be few; and then we shall all say "Oh, that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my last end might be like his!"

M.

The Religious Remembrancer, extracted chiefly from the writings of ancient, eminent divines.

(Continued from p. 209)

NO. VII.

REMEMBER that you must die; that soul and body must be parted, the one to return to dust, the other to appear a naked spirit before the presence of that God, who gave it. To die, is one of the most weighty and serious things that ever creatures experience. Death is so terrible to some that they cannot bear the mention of the name, yet none can avoid the thing. Several things concur to make it the king of terrors; strong pains, conflicts, and agonies go before; fears and terrors attend it; but above all, it is very solemn and awful in its consequences, as it is the door of eternity; the parting point between this world and that which is to come; the utmost line and boundary of all temporal things, translating us into an unknown world of spirits. Oh, what a strange alteration doth death make in every man's condition! either taking him from houses and lands, friends, honours and pleasures, and all the concerns and enjoyments of this world; hurrying him in a moment into the land of darkness, to drink in the fierce wrath of Almighty God for ever, or translating him into the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, to partake of his happiness, in consummate, ineffable, and everlasting glory and joy, with obedient and happy spirits.

Alas! What do men mean by loitering, who have these amazing, unchangeable scenes before them! One would suppose that the very thoughts of death and eternal judgment, should keep from sleeping, and fill with astonishment all who are not by faith and holiness prepared for the comfortable welcome of it, seeing they know not but every day and hour may conclude their life, and when they shut their eyes at night, they may never open them again but in eternity. What solicitous concern should those be in for their precious and immortal souls, who have so much guilt to be removed, so many evil dispositions and affections to be mortified, so many holy and virtuous habits to attain, and so many temptations from within and without to overcome; lest death should come unexpected and find them unprepared? With what sorrows will the review of our past lives fill us, if we are thus surprised! What bitter anguish of heart is couched in those expressions, which a dying person once uttered to a stander-by? crying out, "Oh how have I been deceived! Oh, that I had thought of this sooner! Oh, that I had my time again? How mad was I to lead so sinful and careless a life!

What will become of my miserable soul! Would God but try me once again, I would be a new man, I would live a new life, I would never do as I have hitherto done." Now, that we may not conclude our lives with such dismal, fruitless moans, let us in time consider our latter end, and never give our souls rest, until we have secured their happiness by an interest in the salvation of Jesus Christ, and a sincere conformity to the rules of the gospel. Let us now live as at death we shall wish we had done; that we may meet our last end with comfort, and only desire leave to die, that we may enter into glory and happiness.

No. VIII.

REMEMBER that after death there will be a solemn and impartial judgment, where we must give an account of the things done in the body; and receive a sentence from which there is no appeal, and after which there will be no alteration. Nothing is more astonishing, than that numbers who have so much Christian belief as to acknowledge that there is a day of irrevocable judgment for the ungodly, and so little religion and goodness, that they cannot justly hope it will be favourable to them; are yet so careless of their souls, and joyful in their sins, as if judgment were a dreadless thing. Oh, who can conceive the terror and glory of that solemn day! When our Lord Jesus Christ shall come in all his magnificent glory, with millions of glorious angels and happy spirits, when all nature shall be convulsed at his coming, and the splendid orbs of heaven obscured by the brightness of his appearance; and all the numberless race of men stand before him, to receive their final and irreversible doom! What horror must seize the guilty soul, to find itself naked before the just and impartial Judge of the universe, and all his glorious attendants! when its most secret impurities, and subtle frauds, shall be exposed to public view; and many thousand sinful inclinations and actions, which it had altogether forgotten, shall be charged home upon the conscience with such self-evident convictions of guilt, that it will be neither able to excuse or deny them? When the sentence of the holy law of God will have its full force upon impenitent sinners, with intolerable aggravation for slighting the grace of the gospel? When they shall receive their condemnation from Christ himself in some such terms as these: Remember, I once sent you messages of peace and grace, in my gospel, and you would not hear! I stooped so low as to beseech you to return to God, and to accept of my salvation; promising you the pardon of all your sins, favor and acceptance with God, and you would not regard it. I besought you by the tender mercies of my Father, by all the love and pity I had shewn to you in my death and sufferings; by all the riches of my grace, and the offers of my glory, and yet you slighted it. I repeated my calls and invitations to you, waiting on you many a month and year; directing conscience, ministers, and providences for your good, and

yet you would not consider, nor accept of my grace, nor leave your beloved sins, nor conform to my righteous precepts, nor place your love and trust on your God and Redeemer. Now it is too late; therefore depart from me, ye cursed! into everlasting fire, where shall be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth! Who can conceive the inexpressible horror and confusion of such a sentence? On the other hand, what inconceivable triumph and joy must fill all pious, believing souls to find this Almighty Judge their friend? That he, who loved them above his life, who was their redeemer upon the cross, and has pleaded their cause in heaven, is now to receive them as his purchase and charge, and by his sentence to be possessed of endless glory and happiness? When all their faith and patience, love and duty, shall be revealed by their Judge, and applauded by heaven and earth; and they shall receive the honor of all those graces and virtues, of which their present humility deprives them the due praises? Surely, the prospect of these great events of which we ourselves are not only to be spectators, but the subjects, should restrain us from every secret sin; arm us with power against temptations to evil; excite us to a frequent review of our tempers and practice; and cause us to fly to the grace and hope of a Saviour; that we may be presented before his presence with exceeding joy.

No. IX.

REMEMBER that judgment will fix you in an eternal state of happiness or misery; that you will either be a companion of angels and happy spirits, adoring, loving, praising, and admiring the glorious and blessed God for ever; or a companion of devils and forsaken spirits, banished from God's delightful presence into everlasting horror and despair. Eternity is a continuance of persons and things, in one and the same state and condition for ever, without intermission or change; it is a perpetual glorious day of joy and triumph, or an everlasting night of sorrow, anguish and darkness; which, when ten thousand times ten thousand years are gone will be never the nearer to a conclusion. If we are so happy as to get to heaven, we shall be fixed as pillars in the temple of our God, and go out no more. If we fail, we enter into a state from which there is no redemption, the misery of which will be increased by self-tormenting reflections. "In yonder world," says the unhappy sinner, "I might have had life and salvation, and would not; and now, fain would I have death and annihilation, and cannot. Oh, fool that I was, when I was almost persuaded to be a Christian indeed, to forsake my lusts, and embrace the Saviour; that I deluded myself with vain delays, or suffered myself to be deterred by foolish prejudices, and imaginary difficulties; or contented myself with ineffectual purposes; or diverted my mind from it by earthly cares and sensual pleasures: and now the door is shut, and hopes and happiness are gone for ever!" O eternity, what art thou? The perfection of inconceivable feli-

city; and the aggravation of the least, much more of the greatest misery; and yet how art thou disregarded by stupid man? A criminal that is condemned to die to-morrow, cannot forget it; and yet poor sinners, that are continually uncertain to live an hour, and certain speedily to see the infinite majesty of God, to their inconceivable joy or terror, as sure as they now live, can forget those things, for which a reasoning mind and memory was given them; the unspeakable importance of which one would think sufficient to drown all lesser concerns, as the sound of thunder doth a whisper, or as the beams of the sun obscure a glow-worm. O wonderful stupidity of unrenewed souls! O wonderful folly and distraction of ungodly minds! That ever men can forget an eternal heaven, an eternal hell, an eternal God, and their own eternal, unchangeable condition! When they stand even at the door, and there is nothing but the thin veil of flesh between them and that amazing sight, that eternal gulph, into which they are just ready to step.

"Good God! on what a slender thread
Hang everlasting things!
The eternal state of all the dead,
Upon life's feeble strings.
Infinite joy or endless wo!
Attends on ev'ry breath;
And yet how unconcern'd we go
Upon the brink of death!"

(To be continued.)

THE following are Letters of a pious woman, now deceased, once the dear consort of a minister, written in 1803, to some youths under concern, and who frequently visited the pastor's house. The most of them obtained a hope, and are now walking amiably in the Christian profession. They will, I think, long retain, in grateful remembrance, her tender solicitude for them when their minds were in trouble, and enquiring the way to Christ. The letters are given as they were written, except a few slight alterations. If, now she is dead, she may speak in these lines for the benefit of any one living, it will be owing to the blessing of God, and agreeable to a desire which she manifested when in life, for the prosperity of Zion.

LETTER I.

SIRS,

DO not imagine that I sat an indifferent spectator during the evening you last spent at our house. I hope I feel for my friends, (though I fear I am too indifferent as to vital piety) yet without doubt your minister, who, if he is faithful, must watch for souls as one that must give account, has much greater anxiety for you than I can have. I feel it a delicate point to write to persons in the parish in which I reside, and have deferred it till now. I hope you will accept my feeble attempts to strengthen you in the way of your duty.—Now, my friends, is a time of trial and temptation with you; you are about to form your character for life. You find you were made for immortality, and it is a solemn consideration. You are tried with the frowns and flatteries of your companions whom you esteem, should you appear to be serious; and on the other

hand your conscience tells you that an eternity is before you, that something must be done or you perish.

You find, or will find if you will be Christ's disciples, that you must deny yourselves, take up your cross daily, and not love father or mother more than him; if we do we are not worthy of him. We are under the eye of an all-seeing and heart searching God. To be more clearly convinced of this let me advise you to read the 139th Psalm; and indeed the whole book of Psalms.

Pray for the influences of the Spirt of God to enlighten your mind, that you may understand the scriptures. Without his assistance the bible will be as a sealed book. Commit all your concerns to God; if he is for us who can be against us. Let not your heart be troubled, if we persevere in the way of well-doing, we shall be saved. Yet let us not lean to our righteousness, but labor after an humbling sense of our vileness, ingratitude and rebellion against our Maker, and for time to come live lives of obedience. Let us turn unto the Lord for he will have mercy, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Let us not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. "No man when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed, but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.—Whosoever hath to him shall be given." See Luke viii. 16, 17, 18. Be not discouraged, my friends. God will assist you in carrying on his work, of which prayer as well social as secret is a part. Be assured you shall reap in due time if you faint not. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Those that seek me early shall find me. My son, give me thine heart. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Let us flee to Christ for cleansing, renewing and sanctifying grace. May God give us all an heart, rightly to improve the dispensations of his providence, and a due preparation for death. Adieu.

LETTER II.

MY FRIEND,

"TO do good, and to communicate, forget not," is a scripture injunction. You are pleased in yours to say, you thought my former letter worthy of your attention, &c. You say, "the morning of life is certainly best for us to make our peace with God." In this you are right; but "straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it." I do not say this to hinder you in the way to heaven, but that you may see the need of striving against sin and temptation, and of a self-denying life. "Young men exhort to be sober minded." I hope I rejoice to see something of this kind among us. I pray God it may continue, be abiding, and not pass off as the morning cloud, and early dew. Our religious opportunities do not leave us as they find us. The sun melts

wax, and hardens clay. This you seem sensible of, as you fear you "treat your privileges with neglect, particularly the holy ordinances and prayer, though you think of them every day."

I have one thing to submit to your consideration; If you think you are not fit, and you shall dishonor God to come to Christ, (as you say) can it, my friend, be more fit or safe to remain in your sins, and at a distance from your only Saviour? Rather cast your eyes about you, and you will find a tempter busy with your soul, to keep you from your duty; and do your part, as you are "sensible God will do his." Fly from God's justice to his mercy. I hope you do not live in the neglect of daily secret prayer—if you do you are in a deplorable state, and your soul is in a perishing condition. —If any thing of this kind, namely, writing or conversing on serious subjects, can be of any service to you, or my other friends, although it may expose me to trials from the world, I shall cheerfully undertake it, begging, however, an interest in your prayers that I may have grace to fulfil the duties of my station. I believe that on a dying bed we shall not regret the time that we had spent in the service of God.

"It shan't be said, that praying breath,
"Was ever spent in vain."

From your friend,

Religious Intelligence.

Report of the Directors to the twelfth general meeting of the London Missionary Society.

(Concluded from p. 240.)

CEYLON.

THE directors now proceed to give an account of the mission to the island of Ceylon, committed to the superintendence of their much valued brother the Rev. Mr. Vos, assisted by Mr. Ehrhardt, and Mr. and Mrs. Palm. They must also include some notice of Mr. William Read, who accompanied them from the Cape of Good Hope, with the approbation of Mr. Vos, and though not yet taken into full connexion with the society, as one of its authorised missionaries, will, they hope, conduct himself so satisfactorily as to induce them in due time to recognise his relation to them. It has been already intimated, that Mr. and Mrs. Vos, and Mr. Ehrhardt, proceeded to Tranquebar in the same ship with the brethren Ringletaube, Cran, and Desgranges: from this place, Mr. Vos made an excursion to Negapatnam, where he preached six times both in English and in Dutch to about a hundred people, and administered the Lord's supper to Malabar, Portuguese, and Dutch Christians. He felt great pity for these people, some of whom requested him with tears to remain among them. Soon after his return, the providence of God called him to a painful act of submission to his holy and sovereign appointments, by the decease of Mrs. Vos, who died in the faith

and hope of the gospel, in the hospitable house of a friend at Tranquebar. On the 23d Jan. they sailed for Ceylon, and reached Manaar on the 25th, where Mr. Vos preached in a building formerly used for divine worship, to about fifty people. At this place there are about a hundred protestants without either minister or schoolmaster, and many thousand worshippers of Buddah. On the 4th of February, they came to anchor before Columbo, and immediately waited on the honorable and Rev. Mr. Twistleton, who rejoiced at their arrival, and introduced them directly to his excellency the hon. Frederick North, the governor of the island, to whom they delivered, the letters of introduction in their behalf, with which the secretary of state had kindly furnished them; and also that from the directors of this society. In this interview Mr. Vos, very properly, presented the instructions under which he was to act, to his excellency, who was pleased to express his approbation of them, and requested to take a copy thereof. The Directors have lately received a letter which the honourable governor has done them the honour to write, addressed to their treasurer and secretary, the recital of which cannot fail to afford sincere satisfaction to the society, and to be considered as one of the most interesting parts of this report. It is as follows;

"*Gentlemen*,

"I have received your letter of the 10th Feb. 1804, from the hands of the Rev. Mr. Vos, who arrived here about two months ago, accompanied by Messrs. Ehrhardt and Read. As I had been long seriously afflicted at the gross ignorance of our holy religion, which prevails among the numerous inhabitants of this island, who profess themselves Christians, I was sincerely rejoiced at the arrival of those experienced and worthy men, from whose endeavours I expect the greatest advantage. The ordination of Mr. Vos, as a presbyterian minister, has enabled me to place him at Galle, and to give him a legal pastoral authority over the extensive district dependent on that settlement. The inhabitants of the town have already expressed themselves in an address to me as highly grateful for his pious and intelligent care of their spiritual welfare. The two younger gentlemen, his companions, are likewise employed under his direction; Mr. Ehrhardt at Matura, and Mr. Read at Galle, and as they are occupied in acquiring a knowledge of the Cingalese language, I trust they will exercise their duties in a very profitable manner. I beg leave to assure you, gentlemen, that I will not fail to promote as far as I am able, the good intentions of the society, and that I remain, with high esteem, gentlemen, your most obedient humble servant,

(Signed)

FREDERICK NORTH."

The society will receive this communication with much satisfaction, and consider it as an intimation of the favourable designs of providence towards this distant settlement, that he has been pleased to place over it a governor, whose enlightened mind discerns so justly the beneficial influence of our holy re-

ligion and prompts him to extend his powerful and fostering influence, in favour of those who have devoted themselves to its interests. They will also feel a suitable gratitude to the honourable and Rev. Mr. Twistleton, for the Christian affection, and liberal countenance which he manifests towards our brethren, and which is of so much importance both to their comfort and success.

Not long after these brethren arrived, they were joined by the brother and sister Palm, who were received with equal kindness, and have been appointed to reside at Jaffnapatam. The liberality of government provides in part for the support of each of these missionaries, by which the funds of the society will be relieved. They are actively engaged at these various stations in acquiring the Cingalese language; in preaching to those who understand the Dutch, and in instructing their children. The importance of their labors may be inferred from the following extract from Mr. Vos's letter. "The state of the church in this island is expressed in this one word *miserable*. One hundred thousand of those who are called Christians, because they are baptized, need not go back to heathenism, for they never have been any thing but worshippers of Buddah. O Lord, have mercy on the poor inhabitants of this populous island! You may freely send to me two or three additional missionaries by the first opportunity, and I shall thank you very much for those who have been two full years under the Rev. Mr. Bogue's instruction."

The directors cannot entirely quit the subject of these missionary measures on the continent of India, and in the island of Ceylon, without expressing the gratitude which is due to the providence of God, for the many auspicious circumstances which have attended them, and which they humbly accept as the proof of his gracious approbation, and the pledges of his future blessing. They contemplate with mingled solemnity and satisfaction, those wise and holy appointments, by which fifty millions of heathens have been brought into a direct relation with this Christian country; and considering that the universal spread of the kingdom of Christ, is the ultimate end of the divine counsels in the government of the world, and that the operations of his providence bear an immediate or remote relation to that event, it appears to them highly probable, that the chief reason, on account of which these extensive acquisitions of heathen territory are permitted to be made, by a nation possessing the pure principles of Christianity, is for the introduction of the gospel dispensation into them. On this ground it becomes the especial duty of missionary institutions to follow these footsteps of divine providence; and on the foundation of the British government, to endeavor to superinduce the inestimable privileges of the Redeemer's kingdom. These are treasures too high and sacred to receive their destination from the plan and determination of man. They are the chief blessings which belong to the administration of our

exalted Lord; and it is by attending to the great acts of his providence among the nations of the earth, that we receive the safest and most valuable intimations for the prosecution of missionary objects.

CHINA.

In their last report, the directors announced their intention of sending three or four missionaries to the Prince of Wales' island, as a measure preparatory to a mission to some part of the Chinese empire, if the providence of God should hereafter open their way thither. They stated, also, their desire to connect with this great object some collateral ones, especially the circulation of religious tracts, and probably a mission to some of the Malay nations. For these purposes, two of their accepted missionaries have been selected, and for some time past have been employed in the study of the language, in which they have till lately been assisted by a native of China, now in London; and as it also appears, that an acquaintance with some branches of the mathematics, and with the medical art, is likely to facilitate their introduction and settlement in that country, they are engaged in these pursuits; and the society are under great obligations to some respectable gentlemen for the advantages which they enjoy in relation to these studies. Well satisfied as the directors have reason to be with the devotedness, application, and acquisitions of these brethren, yet from the respect which the Chinese nation is known to attach to age, and the contempt which they express for youth, it has appeared to them very desirable that an elder Christian should accompany this mission. Feeling its transcendant importance, their attention has been naturally directed towards their highly respected and experienced missionary, the Rev. Dr. Vanderkemp. They have conceived it to be probable that the ample supply which has been sent to Africa, may render it desirable that he should remove to some new station.

This subject they have therefore recommended to his consideration, and requested him to determine thereon, according to his own views of the divine will respecting him. Towards the end of the present year it is probable that those who are to proceed from England, will embark for Prince of Wales' Island, where there is a considerable number of Chinese, and where it is expected that they will find an opportunity of attaining a competent knowledge of the Chinese language, after which it is intended that they shall translate the holy scriptures into it.

The directors have contemplated this as a measure of peculiar importance, and connected with the highest interests of a third part of the human race. They think therefore, that an erroneous or imperfect translation, which might discourage the attempt to produce a more correct one, would be attended with pernicious consequences. It has appeared to them, that in order to accomplish this work in a satisfactory manner, the translators should be well acquainted with the Hebrew and

Greek tongues, in which the holy scriptures were principally written; as also with that of the Chinese into which they are to be translated; and lastly, that they should have a judicious and comprehensive view of those great and leading principles, which evangelical Christians have generally considered to be derived from the word of God. These are the qualifications which the directors were desirous of combining in the execution of this great work. It has however recently been ascertained, that a version of the scriptures into the Chinese language is now commenced under the patronage of the college of Fort William in Bengal, by means of a native of China, who is a professor of the Chinese language, assisted by a Chinese Moonshee. He is an Armenian Christian, and translates from the Armenian bible. Should this be accomplished with fidelity and accuracy, it will of course render another translation superfluous, and the directors will unite with the whole Christian world, in a tribute of gratitude to the conductors of that institution for rendering so eminent a service to the cause of Christ. At all events, they are entitled to great commendation for employing the best instruments within their reach in so important a work.

As the Chinese professor is not acquainted with the Hebrew or Greek languages, and may not perhaps have those just views of the evangelical doctrines which to the directors appear so desirable; and as those who patronize the work, it is presumed, are unacquainted with the Chinese tongue, and are therefore incompetent to judge of the fidelity and accuracy of the translation, it must remain for the present doubtful, whether this work will supersede the necessity of another, to be undertaken with superior advantages, and executed in a nearer conformity to the genius and spirit of the inspired writings. The brethren will rejoice in being able to assist in any degree in so interesting an object, and they will act agreeably to what may hereafter appear to be their duty, when they are more fully acquainted with this subject: in the mean time it is a very satisfactory circumstance, that in the college of Fort William, the means of receiving regular instruction in the Chinese language are to be found, of which our missionaries will be able to avail themselves, should they be disappointed in this respect at Prince of Wales' island.

MISSION TO THE JEWS.

Having stated the transactions of the society in relation to the heathen world, the directors now proceed to give an account of the humble attempt which they have made to introduce the Christian ministry among the Jews. This is a measure which was referred to in the last report, and at that time the directors expressed their earnest hope that its prosperity and success might lie with great weight on the hearts of Christians. In the month of July last, the Rev. Mr. Frey, who had been three years in the missionary seminary at Gosport, opened his course of lectures to the posterity of Abra-

ham at Jewry-street chapel; the Rev. Mr. Ball and congregation having very kindly accommodated the society therewith. These lectures he proposed should consist principally of a statement of Christian doctrine; an explanation of the types and ceremonies of the Jewish dispensation; and an exposition of select portions of scripture; and to this plan he has generally adhered: it has also been his custom on these occasions, to read a part of the Old Testament in the Hebrew language, and then pronounce the translation of it in English, sentence by sentence, accompanying the whole with suitable remarks. These lectures have been well attended, and particularly by Christians. For a few weeks after their commencement, a considerable number of the house of Israel were present. This number afterwards decreased, as might have been expected from various causes. Some of them had not courage enough to stand against the insults, mocking, and imprecations, to which they were exposed from their brethren who crowded the street; and many were prevented from attending by their superiors, and relations. Notwithstanding these discouragements, some few have been always perceived listening to the word of truth, whilst no doubt, others came privately, desirous, like Nicodemus to avoid public notice.

Besides these lectures, Mr. Frey has been frequently engaged in preaching, both on the Lord's day, and in the week, to large and attentive auditories in various places of worship; and on these occasions also some of his brethren have usually attended. He holds every Friday evening in his own apartment, a meeting of prayer for the conversion of the Jews, which has been attended with the presence and blessing of the God of Abraham.

Although his ministry was more immediately directed to his own nation, yet, through the sovereign blessing of God, it has apparently been useful to others. There is ground to believe that several sinners from among the Gentiles have been converted, and others established in the truth as it is in Jesus, who were before wavering, and on the borders of infidelity; whilst true believers in Christ have been edified and strengthened in the faith and hope of the gospel. It has been attended also with a beneficial effect on some of the children of Israel: it is ascertained that it has excited a spirit of inquiry among them, and produced in many, a doubt, whether Jesus may not really be the Messiah promised to their fathers. Several are become inquirers after the truth, and a few, it is hoped, have already been brought to the true knowledge of Jesus Christ the Lord.

These circumstances the directors consider as intimations of the divine approbation, and are encouraged thereby to proceed in this work. Many and great are the difficulties which oppose its success, and they feel their need of the assistance of divine wisdom at every step. It is their design to employ every suitable means within their reach to attract the attention, and promote the instruction of

this people: and judging that it may be of great use to the Jews, not only in this kingdom, but on the continent also, that a series of essays should be circulated among them, tending to establish the authority and excellency of the Christian dispensation as the consummation and perfection of the Jewish, they have unanimously requested the performance of this great service from the Rev. Greville Ewing, of Glasgow, and have the pleasure to announce that he has kindly consented to undertake it. Whenever the spirit of prayer shall be poured out on the Christian church in behalf of the Jews, in a much more eminent degree than it has hitherto been, the directors will hail it as a happy signal that the day of grace is beginning to dawn on this people, and that any success which may already have attended the ministry of Mr. Frey, will prove to be like the first drops which bring on the abundant shower: they would have now urged, especially upon the ministers of the gospel who are present at this anniversary, this great and important duty, had they not the opportunity, which they embrace with far greater pleasure, of referring them to the public address which will shortly be delivered on this subject, by one of their highly respected brethren.

The directors have now presented to the society a general statement of its concerns. The benevolent heart will contemplate with gratitude and satisfaction, that by the blessing of God in its humble exertions, the dark and awful aspect of the heathen world has been already in some small degree brightened: here and there a few missionary stations are established, from which the waters of life are beginning to flow for the healing of the nations; but their salutary streams have as yet reached a very little way. Waste places, vast and immeasurable, surround them, in which the seed of the gospel has never yet been sown, nor have they been penetrated by the fertilizing beams of the sun of righteousness. Alas, how little has been done for the advancement of our Redeemer's kingdom, and how immense the empire over which his great adversary still holds an undisturbed possession!

Regretting the languor of their zeal, and the feebleness of their past exertions, and relying on superior influences, the directors will now look to the means by which they hope to be enabled to carry on this spiritual warfare with more energy and effect into the dominions of the enemy.

It affords them much satisfaction to state, that an increasing disposition to engage in the labors of a missionary, has been manifested since the last anniversary, which they consider as an intimation of the gracious designs of God to render this institution more extensively useful. In the seminary at Gosport there are now fourteen students, some of whom are likely to strengthen the stations already formed, some will be qualified to preach the gospel in the French language, and some among those nations on the continent in which its light has been obscured for ages; and there are besides some within their

reach, who appear likely to be suitable for extending the work of God among the Jews. There seems therefore a coincidence in the qualifications of these young men, with the occurrences of providence, and the aspect of the world, as it respects both the heathen, the Jews, and the nations of Europe, where the pure gospel is buried under the corruptions of antichrist, or rejected through the prevalence of infidelity. Each of these is a legitimate object of this society, to which by the blessing of God the directors will feel it their duty to attend, to the utmost extent of the means which may be committed to them, and in the proportions which correspond with their respective importance, and with the constitution of the society.

They rely on the piety and zeal of the religious public for the production of the funds which may be adequate to the enlarged scale of their operation; and they do this with confidence, because the object in view is above all others dear to every Christian heart. It is the advancement of the kingdom, and the manifestation of the glory of their Lord and Redeemer, on the theatre of this world, in which he was crucified. The accomplishment of this object is secured in the purposes and promises of God, and he has been pleased to sanction the endeavors of his servants to promote it in an eminent degree and in various ways. He has rebuked our unbelief by demonstrating that, in proportion to the sincere and well directed endeavors of his people, obstructions have been removed, and facilities increased. The peculiar character of the divine dispensations in the present day —the important changes under which a great proportion of the world is passing—the rapidity with which the plans of providence appear to be advancing to a crisis; should all inspire the hearts of Christians with new energy, to improve the occasions as they are continually arising, and on the ruins of the kingdom of antichrist, as well as in heathen countries, to hasten to lay the foundations of Christian temples.

Whilst the powers that are in Heaven are shaken, and the foundations of the earth are out of course, may HE *who is head over all things to the church, establish and perpetuate this institution, and condescend to use it as an humble link in that vast chain of providential events, by which the great ends of his wisdom and holiness shall be effected, all enemies be put under his feet, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our* LORD *and of his* CHRIST.

London, 15th May, 1806.

From the "Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Missionary Society."

Proceedings of the Committee.

In August, 1805, Captain Wickes being in London, the committee sent by him to the care of Robert Ralston, esq. Philadelphia, a thousand guineas, to be remitted from thence in dollars to the brethren in India. On the captain's arrival in America, he not only transacted the business with Mr. Ralston, but endeavored by public advertisements to promote a collec-

tion among the churches in that country, in order to augment the sum. This object was liberally taken up by many of the ministers in the United States, and collections were made in their congregations. We do not yet know the exact amount of them; but whatever it may be, the generous conduct of our venerable friend, and of his countrymen, deserves our warmest acknowledgments.*

In November last, the secretary received a letter from Mr. Ralston informing him that the dollars would be sent to India in the spring; that captain Wickes would shortly sail in a vessel of his for Holland: after which he would touch at England, in his way to Bengal, and that if he had any persons or goods to send by him, he would take them free of charge to the society as to passage or freightage. The society having two young men on probation, Mr. Chater, and Mr. Robinson, the committee thought it right to avail themselves of so favorable an opportunity of sending them out. Mr. *Chater* is a member of the baptist church at Middleton-Cheney, and of late a student at Bristol academy. He has for some time had his heart set upon this work. Mr. *Robinson* is a member of the baptist church at Olney, and was for some time under the tuition of Mr. Sutcliff, but of late has been at Bristol at the expense of the society.

On Saturday, March 8, Capt. Wickes, arrived in the Thames, in the ship Benjamin Franklin. On Wednesday, the 12th, a public meeting was held at Mr. Hinton's place of worship at Oxford, for the solemn designation of our young friends to the work.

At this meeting it was unanimously resolved,

1. That the thanks of the society be presented to Robert Ralston, of Philadelphia, esq. for his friendly attention to its interests, especially for his generous offer in the present instance, of taking outthe missionaries and goods free of expense.

2. That the thanks of the society be presented also to Capt. Wickes, for his kind and numerous services in promoting its designs.

* The amount collected principally in Philadelphia, and remitted by Mr. Ralston, was near 5000 dolls. Since this remittance was made Mr. Ralston has received a letter from the Rev. J. Eckly of Boston, (which we cannot insert for the want of room) stating that further and very liberal encouragement has been received for this object in Boston. Two thousand dollars are actually received, and it is stated as altogether probable that another 2000 will be contributed. Among the contributors we notice the very uncommon liberality of Mr. Salisbury and Mr. Phillips. The first gave 200 dollars, the latter 500 dollars. Many will admire these examples of liberality, but how many will follow them?

From the Christian Observer.

Some thoughts on the duties binding on the Christian in his intercourse with others.

IN all our intercourse with our neighbours, we are directed to one plain simple rule; "You shall do to others as you would they should do unto you." We are referred also to a simple but most powerful principle, "You

shall love your neighbor as yourselves." Now the true Christian will endeavor always to speak and act under the influence of that principle, and according to that rule. He will seek therefore the good of his neighbor; and numerous opportunities will probably occur when he may be the instrument of much good to him. He will at least be careful that he do not injure him by his intercourse.

Having laid down these general principles, I shall now proceed to point out a few particulars, in which a Christian will be studious of his neighbor's good to edification.

He will endeavor, by his example at least, to discountenance the practice of *traducing others.* When an absent person is named in a way which tends to discredit his character or reputation, he will immediately set a watch over his lips. He will place himself in the situation of the accused person, and will consider how he himself would wish to be treated were he the subject of accusation. He will regard himself therefore as the guardian of the absent individual. While he discharges the debt which he owes to justice, in expressing his abhorrence of what is really wrong, he will take care, on the other hand, to speak very tenderly of the offender. He will not condemn without sure grounds. He will not hastily or readily join in the condemnation. He will be very slow in believing all that is reported. He will recollect how much exaggeration there is in the world. And he will consider what might be said by the accused person in his own defence. Where he cannot entirely acquit, he will yet judge tenderly, and with a due sense of the infirmity of human nature; and will rather be silent, or turn the conversation to some other subject, than be loud in the cry against his neighbor.

There is a common and sinful practice in the world of *holding up absent persons to ridicule*, in which the Christian will be careful not to join. It is not here intended to forbid good-humoured and innocent reflections on absent friends. There is a way of mentioning their peculiarities without diminishing the regard which ought to be felt for them. But how frequently are a man's foibles placed in so prominent a light, as to obscure his more valuable qualities, and to make him appear so ridiculous, that his influence is diminished, and his character lowered. Here, therefore, it will be necessary to weigh well our words, as the injury we may do in this way is incalculable. It is possible, that with some of the hearers at least, the unfavorable impression which is thus produced, may never be effaced: and if the person who is made the object of ridicule has the reputation of being a religious character, religion itself may be degraded in their esteem by being thus unhappily associated.

It will be allowed, I conceive, to be the duty of a Christian to study to promote his neighbor's real good. But how often is a principle adopted, which is destructive of this end? How often is it made the object *to please him* even at the expense of injuring him? Few things are

more seriously hurtful, and yet few things are more common in the world, than *to flatter* those with whom we converse. This may indeed please them: but how will it please them? By gratifying that vanity which is at once their sin and snare. A Christian then will be very cautious in employing complimentary expressions. If he sees another under the influence of vanity, laying wait for a tribute of flattery, he will not conciliate his favor by flattering him. He will please God rather than man. He will consider the future good of the person rather than his present gratification. It is dreadful to reflect how much evil has been done by the prostituting of our speech in the way which is here censured. The most flagitious persons have not only been received into company, but have even been flattered as if they had been guilty of no crime: and though every tongue can be loud in censuring them when absent, no disapprobation is manifested towards them when present. Thus the notions of virtue and vice are confounded; and vice grows bold and hardened, not meeting the shame and contempt which it deserves.

The Christian ought also to be careful, lest by an unguarded method of expressing himself in conversation, he should *countenance and confirm his neighbor in his sins.*

Is a person for instance guilty of excess in *drinking?* A considerate Christian will carefully avoid every expression, which may be construed by him into an apology for his vices. He will not therefore commend, at least without due discrimination, the character of another, who may be addicted to the same pernicious habit; nor will he declaim against being too rigid and precise: for however just his remarks might be when made to a hermit in his cell, or however true the words may be, taken in themselves; they may prove very injurious when applied, as they will be, by the person to whom they are addressed. The same rule holds good with respect to every other vice of our neighbor. It is our duty to consider what is his failing, and to guard against strengthening it. This will not indeed be the way to please him; but *to please* must not be the first and principal object in our intercourse with others, though it may and ought to be a secondary one: *to do real good to our neighbor* should ever be the Christian's first and principal object.

An ambitious prince like Alexander, will undoubtedly at the last day be answerable for a dreadful degree of guilt; but let it not be supposed that he alone will bear the whole charge of it. His courtiers will bear a part. Their discourses cherished in him the love of ambition, and the thirst of glory. They fed the flame which consumed him. In like manner it is to be feared, that every man in a superior station has a circle round him which flatters his vices; and pushes him forward in the career of sin, instead of checking him in it. And none do this so effectually as those whose character, profession, or age, renders them respectable. A word from them, not of ex-

plicit approval of vice, for that would revolt their principles and feelings—but of extenuation of human frailty in general, or of ill timed commendation even of candor; any thing, in short, which may be brought distantly to bear in palliation of their failings, will have more weight with them than the loudest applauses of the profligate. Such characters, therefore ought particularly to weigh their words, lest they should be hereafter found to have encouraged sin.

It is not intended to lay down any precise rule with respect to the duty of *reproof*, or to say in what way it may most effectually, and therefore most prudently, be administered. When injudiciously administered, it defeats its own purpose: but still the Christian must remember the command to reprove his brother, and in no wise to suffer sin upon him. He will consider that "he that rebuketh a man shall afterwards find more favor than he that flattereth with his tongue."

There is another evil against which a religious man will carefully guard in his conversation with the men of the world, viz. the *so concealing his true sentiments* as to appear to think in no respect differently from themselves. It is not enough that he does not directly approve of their maxims and ways of thinking. If he studiously is silent when these are advanced; if he indirectly countenance their modes of living and acting, by appearing to fall in with all they say, and by his shewing no disapprobation of their views and sentiments, he will not act the part of a faithful servant of his God.

Every man who goes into company with others, has duties towards them to discharge: to these the Christian will never be inattentive. To his *superiors*, it is his duty, in conversation, to shew respect, "to give honor to whom honour is due:" he will therefore take care to utter nothing arrogant, or unfit for his station. In company with his *inferiors*, it will be his care to manifest a spirit of meekness, and kindness, and that true condescension which does not appear sensible of superiority. In company with *equals*, his conversation ought to convey the ideas of mildness, good will, and peace, and to aim, as a branch of Christian love, to communicate pleasure, and to do good to all with whom he associates. It seems superfluous to urge here the duty of avoiding to give in any way unnecessary pain to those with whom we converse. The duty of love and kindness is so binding upon a Christian, that one can scarcely conceive that person to be entitled to the name who can knowingly inflict a needless wound on the feelings of others.

In matters *of trade and commerce*, a real Christian will find abundant cause to guard his conversation. "Between buying and selling there generally wanteth not sin."—"It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, but when he is gone his way then he boasteth." In all transactions therefore of commerce, a true Christian will be much on his guard against speaking what is not strictly true for the sake of his own advantage. He will not, in buying, take advantage of the ignorance or necessity of

the seller, to depreciate his goods; and, in selling, will rather abide by the loss himself than deceive his neighbor by an untruth. It may be said perhaps, that if all this strictness were practised, trade could not be carried on. Undoubtedly it could not, as it too generally *is* carried on. One of the sacrifices which a Christian is called to make for the sake of religion, is to give up many opportunities of gain; and it is in such cases that a conscientious regard to the law of God will discover itself. The man who truly fears God will preserve his integrity inviolable, cost him what it will. But even in this life he will seldom eventually be a loser by such conduct. For so much value is necessarily affixed, in commercial transactions, to the principles of the parties; and so much confidence must necessarily be reposed in them; that it will not often be found, that the truly upright will ultimately sustain any even worldly disadvantage, from a rigid adherence to the rules of integrity.

From what has been said, the reader may perceive of how practical a nature is true religion. We seldom open our mouths, but we find occasion for the exercise of religious principle. Those, therefore, greatly err who would confine religion to the Church or the closet. There indeed principles are acquired; but the world is the theatre in which those principles are to be carried into exercise. By meditation and prayer the heart is cleansed; but it is in the ordinary intercourse of society that the Christian's light is so to shine before his fellow creatures, that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father which is in heaven.

In fine, the conversation of Christians should be so regulated that it may "minister grace to the hearers." Let us then guard our words. "Putting away lying, speak every one truth with his neighbor." "Let all bitterness and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from us with all malice."—"Lay aside all malice and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking."—"Speak not evil one of another."—"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying." J. D.

From the Christian Observer.

I HAVE frequently regretted the discredit brought upon religion, and the little progress made in it, by many, whom I should be extremely unwilling to regard as merely nominal Christians, as possessed of the form of godliness, but destitute of its power. This, Sir, is a subject of the utmost moment; and one which forcibly presses itself on every thinking mind. Permit me then earnestly to solicit the attention of your readers to the following view of it. I shall speak, Sir, from experience; and possibly on this very account may express myself with the greater earnestness.

Christianity, there is reason to fear, is divisible not only into *real* and *nominal*, but into what may with propriety be termed *general*

and *particular* religion. Many whose minds have been strongly impressed with the supreme importance of religious truths, and who perhaps, for a considerable time, have been *wholly* actuated by its energetic principles, slide away by degrees, through indolence and remissness, into the *general* sort of religion just mentioned. Others, perhaps, never rose to the same height of Christian attainments with those last-mentioned; but from the first period of their engaging in the service of God, have conceived that there has been little more to do, and have rested satisfied with this *general* religion. By this I mean, that they have not been accustomed in their daily repentance, in their self-examination, in their resolutions against sin, and in their cultivation of Christian graces to descend sufficiently to *particulars*. They repent of sin, it is true; but in so *general* a way, that they are rarely very deeply affected with it. They pray for increasing holiness; but still they deal so much in generals, as seldom to produce in their minds that earnest endeavor to attain it, which is absolutely necessary if we would expect our prayers to be efficacious. Here then, Sir, lies the grand evil of the conduct which I am now condemning. The system here attempted to be described neither universally influences the conduct, nor deeply impresses the heart. I do not mean to say that that divine principle which constitutes the distinction between vital and nominal religion, is wholly extirpated. But this I may safely assert, that the principle is miserably unproductive. Let me illustrate this by a practical instance. If, for example, the characters in question apply themselves to the entire conquest of any favorite sin, (though I am inclined to think that even this is seldom done with *sincerity*,) they do not, as persons really in earnest, trace it through all its ramifications; they do not scrutinize with sufficient, if any, accuracy, its origin and its real nature, the occasions which are apt to call it forth, or the circumstances which give it the greatest power. Again, does any Christian grace require culture? The means they employ in order to cultivate it expose the inefficiency of their principles. They pray for it in a general way, and may wish to attain the object of their prayers: but they are yet unwilling to sacrifice their love of indolence, or the pursuit of a favorite scheme to their eternal interests: they are averse to that spiritual activity, that steady vigilance, and that unfeigned sorrow for daily falls, which seem essential to a Christian's progress and success. The bent of their minds may be in the main towards holiness, and so far it is well: but do they exert that vigour, and bring into action those means which they might and ought to do, and which are well exemplified in the conduct of those who gave ALL diligence to make their calling and election SURE? Is the sin to which they find themselves prone traced through all its ramifications? Are the motives to cultivate any virtue, frequently and earnestly and particularly pressed upon the mind? Are circumstances favorable to its exercise eagerly embraced?

And when they occur is the mind resolute in profiting by them? These are some of the most powerful means for advancing religion; and they are those which a person really in earnest feels it his duty and delight daily to employ. He holds them to be absolutely indispensable to the attainment of spirituality of mind. But the characters in question, I fear, know little of such exertions. A deadly languor pervades their souls. The subject of religion is deplorably forgotten through the day; and when called to mind at the stated hours of religious retirement, it is received with a cold and wandering heart. Sin, indeed, may be opposed, divine assistance to this end may be prayed for, and victory over sin may be the real desire of the heart. Yet surely, if that desire were sufficiently fervent, sin would be more vigorously resisted, and the Divine assistance implored with a more earnest and more undivided spirit: there would be that anguish of soul when tempted to evil, that love of communion with God, and that unremitting endeavor to overcome besetting sins, and attain the opposite graces, which bespeak a mind earnest to approve itself before God. But, Sir, is the line of conduct, which these persons pursue, sufficient to repel the advances of a foe equally subtle, vigilant, and powerful? Is it sufficient that we oppose to his indefatigable arts, feeble struggles, cold prayers, and a partial repentance? And can we expect under such circumstances to make any progress in the Christian life?

It is thus that the fortress of the human heart is assailed in its most vulnerable parts. The enemy does not venture to attempt taking the citadel by storm; he does not labor to seduce it at once from its allegiance: this, he is aware, is too arduous an undertaking, and might lead to the exposure, and in the end, to the defeat of his designs. It is by secretly sapping the fortifications, by watching to seize upon some unguarded pass, and by encouraging treachery within, that he anticipates their final accomplishment. In the mean time the fortress is not yet taken, nor its allegiance withdrawn; it still in the general resists the enemy's assaults; the fault as well as danger rests in not paying sufficient attention to provide for the defence of every particular point, and especially to secure those that appear most assailable. Slight damages are not instantly repaired, nor is internal treachery an object of perpetual jealousy. Can we in such circumstances, look with confidence on the security of the fortress? Should we not rather be filled with habitual anxiety, lest some unfortunate incident, some sudden surprise, or some successful traitor within, should deliver it into the enemy's hands?

But to drop this metaphor; I repeat a former position, there is hardly a more deplorable effect of the conduct I am now condemning, than that it exposes and weakens the bulwarks of the soul. In the case of those especially, who previous to their acquaintance with religion had been living in the habitual commission of known sin, the dan-

ger is imminent in the extreme. For what is it to which such persons must now look to preserve their integrity, to repel the tempter, and to overcome the most alluring solicitations to evil, solicitations aided by inveterate habits, and maintaining a secret correspondence with a powerful party within the heart itself? Next to Divine aid, without which every human effort is undoubtedly vain, their only safety consists in that unremitting watchfulness to avoid sin, and that anguish of soul consequent upon any relapse, which the indolent system now reprobated tends utterly to annihilate. These are the Christian's arms. With these he is to overcome his spiritual foes. Deprive him of these, and you leave him a defenceless prey to his enemies. True it is, that his own unassisted arm would be insufficient even to repel, much more to overpower his adversaries. But the Christian's arm is nerved with more than mortal strength. And though without that supernatural energy his weapons must fall useless from his hands, yet it is the will of God, that the one should co-operate with the other, and that to procure from him strength for the combat, the Christian must conscientiously use the appointed means of defence and resistance.

"——————Alterius sic
Altera poscit opem res et conjurat amice."

While however I thus endeavor to press on the Christian the indispensable duty of spiritual vigilance and activity, or, in the lauguage of St. Paul, of "arming himself with the whole armour of God, that he may be able to stand in the evil day," I am especially solicitous to obviate any suspicion that places human exertion in competition with the efficacy of Divine grace. In deploring the miserable consequences of indolence, I do not forget that God is all in all.

I proceed to point out another evil resulting from a system so unworthy a good soldier of Jesus Christ. This religion of generalities not only endangers the existence of religion in the soul, it strikes at the very root of a Christian's internal tranquillity. "Drink deep or taste not," is a citation most strictly applicable to the pleasures of religion. Let the true Christian be reminded, that when he has once enlisted himself under the banners of the Captain of his Salvation, his happiness is inseparably connected with a vigorous course of active warfare. Coldness, and indifference are in their own nature ruinous. Spiritual happiness lies in success; and a fair prospect of success, in steady and unwearied exertion. And I appeal to any who are acquainted with the divine life, whether peace can coexist with idleness. Surely God loves his servants too well to suffer them quietly to wander from his way, without endeavoring to recal them. The wanderers find their path rough and thorny. In spite of a somewhat confident, and it may be, a just persuasion, that they are still the servants of God, their mind is not at ease; something within seems to whisper that all is not as it might be, perhaps as it has been. Little satisfaction is ex-

perienced in daily self-examination, and as little in the retrospect of past weeks or months. In reading the Scriptures, or any religious book, an unwelcome dread respecting the commands of God, and the intimations of his displeasure towards the slothful and careless, surprises and disturbs their minds; and this is accompanied with a secret disinclination to his service, and a desire either of explaining away the supposed severity of the divine law, or of shaping it by their own conduct. Such dispositions I think, clearly argue the heart to be in an unsound state; and are rarely, if ever, experienced by the more active Christian. That it saps the very foundations of religious tranquillity is self-evident. Do the characters in question, (I appeal to themselves) when they turn their thoughts within, and examine the general cast of their feelings on the subject of religion, discover that perfect ease and satisfaction, not to say joy, that peace of mind, or that unfeigned willingness to lay open their hearts without disguise before God, which, I think, characterise the diligent and self-denying Christian, except when his spirits happen to be oppressed by external causes? More instances might be adduced in which the life of these persons is saddened, and their mind burthened by disquietude and suspicion; for which their exemption from the cheerful labors of a Christian warrior, is utterly unable to compensate. It would be injustice to religion to admit, that those exertions do in the slightest degree destroy its peculiar pleasures: they on the contrary enhance them.

But my paper has already, I fear, swelled to too great a length, and I hasten to a conclusion. Allow me however to remark, that no one would be more really grieved than myself to give *unnecessary* pain to any weak, but sincere follower of that compassionate Saviour, whose character it is not to break the bruised reed. Yet to cure the wound, it must first be probed; and tenderness for the feelings of the patient should not interfere with exertions for his recovery.

Let such readers as feel themselves interested in the subject of this communication, consider it with the attention and candor required from those who profess to hold the truth in *sincerity*. I feel the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of sketching more than an indistinct outline of a design, which the peculiar circumstances of individuals can alone complete, and fill up with the proper gradations of light and shade. Such persons have indeed an infallible criterion of conduct, I mean the revelation of God in his word; and by that we shall be examined in the day when *God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel*. But the study of the sacred volume will avail little, unless each affection of the mind, and each course of action, be referred to its decision with that *distinct particularity* which results from a patient and honest anxiety to know what we must do to be saved. Christians should imitate those "children of this generation," who, in ar-

ranging their secular concerns, avoid confusion and uncertainty by managing every transaction *separately*.

Your readers, Sir, will perceive, that my subject is by no means exhausted. The insertion of this paper may, perhaps, encourage me to pursue it as opportunities offer themselves.

X.

Character of the Apostle Paul, by Milner.

—— WE have now finished the lives of two men, of singular excellence unquestionably, James the Just, and Paul of Tarsus. The former, by his uncommon virtues, attracted the esteem of a whole people, who were full of the strongest prejudices against him: and in regard to the *latter*, the question may be asked with great propriety, whether such another man ever existed among all those who have inherited the corrupted nature of Adam? He had evidently a soul large and capacious, and possessed of those seemingly contradictory excellencies which, whenever they appear in combination, fail not to form an extraordinary character. But not only his talents were great and various,—his learning also was profound and extensive; and many persons with far inferior abilities and attainments have effected national revolutions, or otherwise distinguished themselves in the history of mankind. His consummate fortitude was tempered with the rarest gentleness, and the most active charity. His very copious and vivid imagination was chastised by the most accurate judgment, and was connected with the closest argumentative powers Divine grace alone could compose so wonderful a temperature; insomuch, that for the space of near thirty years after his conversion, this man, whose natural haughtiness and fiery temper had hurried him into a very sanguinary course of persecution, lived the friend of mankind; returned good for evil continually; was a model of patience and benevolence, and steadily attentive only to heavenly things, while yet he had a taste, a spirit, and a genius, which might have shone among the greatest statesmen and men of letters that ever lived.

THE

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An ADDRESS from the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, to the Ministers and People of the State: and a Narrative on the subject of Missions for the year 1806. *To which are subjoined a Statement of the Funds of the Society, and a List of Books sent to the New Settlements.*

IN this their annual Report, on the subject of missions, the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut would first of all call on the ministers and people of the State, to unite with them in an ascription of praise to him who is king in Sion, for his smiles upon the missionary cause in general another year; and for that measure of success with which he has been pleased to attend the efforts of the institution in this State.

To advance the glory of God, in the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom, is an object which should call forth the most vigorous exertions. If there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, how ought the professed disciples of Christ on earth to be zealous and engaged, in spreading the knowledge of that name, through which alone there is salvation! May this consideration animate all who have a regard for the divine glory and the salvation of immortal souls, to exert themselves to the utmost; in promoting these objects, and to be importunate in their addresses to the throne of grace, for those divine influences to accompany the efforts of Missionary Societies, and the labors of missionaries, without which those efforts and labors will be in vain!

The Trustees now invite the attention of the public to the following information received from their missionaries, since the publication of their last narrative; and to the remarks accompanying that information.

The Rev. Messrs. *Joseph Badger*, *Thomas Robbins*, and *David Bacon* were reappointed, last January, to labor as missionaries, through the year, in the territory called New Connecticut. Mr. *Badger*, continued in the service

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